



الحمد لله وحده، والصلاة والسلام على مولانا رسول الله وآله وصحبه.

Dear Citizens,

The commemoration of historical events is not simply a cause for celebration. It is also an opportunity to ponder the values and principles that inspired earlier generations and that help build the present and confidently look to the future.

In this regard, the commemoration of the glorious Revolution of the King and the People is no exception. It is a constantly renewed revolution whose torch is carried generation after generation.

Besides having deep-rooted national significance relating to the Moroccan citizens' strong attachment to their King and their sacrifice for the freedom and independence of the homeland, the celebration of this event is also associated with Morocco being part of the Maghreb and of Africa.

That historical era was characterized by coordination and solidarity between the leaders of the Moroccan resistance movement and the Algerian Liberation Front.

It was agreed to turn the commemoration of the second anniversary of the Revolution of 20 August into an opportunity to extend the revolution to Maghreb countries. As a result, popular uprisings took place across Morocco and Algeria.

Moreover, the Moroccan resistance movement provided moral and material support to the Algerian revolution which, at the time, was facing a fierce campaign by colonial forces seeking to quash it before it celebrated its first anniversary.

That uprising and that solidarity breathed new life into the Algerian revolution, and the two countries also played a major role in the liberation and independence of Africa.

Today, given the current circumstances facing Arab peoples and the Maghreb region, we are in great need of that spirit of solidarity to enable us to rise to common development and security challenges.

We hope that the commitment and sincere solidarity which have always bound the Algerian and Moroccan peoples will be rekindled so that we may continue to work together, honestly and in good faith, to serve Arab and Maghreb causes and rise to challenges in Africa.

Dear Citizens,

The problems plaguing African peoples today, such as backwardness, poverty, migration, wars and conflicts, in addition to despair and succumbing to extremist and terrorist groups, is the result of the disastrous policy adopted for decades by colonial powers.



The latter looted Africa's resources, stifled the potential of its sons and daughters, mortgaged their future, impeded the continent's development and sowed the seeds of discord and strife among African countries.

Despite the extensive damage caused by colonialism, I believe Africa has the means to ensure its development and to take its destiny into its own hands, thanks to the resolve of African peoples and to the continent's human and natural resources.

Our decision that Morocco should take its natural place, once again, within the African institutional family clearly illustrates our commitment to continue supporting the causes of African peoples.

For Morocco, Africa means more than just being part of a geographical area, or having historical bonds with the continent. Africa also means sincere affection, appreciation, close human and spiritual relations as well as tangible solidarity. Furthermore, Africa is the natural extension of Morocco and the embodiment of the country's strategic depth.

This multi-dimensional relationship puts Morocco in the center of Africa; it also means Africa holds a special place in Moroccans' hearts. For this reason, Africa has been given top priority in Morocco's foreign policy.

I believe what is good for Morocco is good for Africa – and vice versa. There is one and the same destiny. I also believe there can be no progress without stability: either the two go together, or they do not exist.

Morocco always gives to the peoples of its continent; it does not expect to take from them. Its commitment to African issues and concerns was never made with the intention of exploiting the continent's assets and natural resources – unlike neocolonialist practices.

While it is natural that Morocco should benefit from cooperation with African sister nations, my country always makes sure that our cooperation is mutually profitable.

Morocco does not view Africa as a market for the sale and promotion of Moroccan products, or as a continent for making quick profit. We see Africa as a forum for joint action, for promoting development in the region, and for serving African citizens.

In this respect, Morocco contributes, along with other African countries, to the implementation of human development projects and the provision of social services which have a direct bearing on the lives of people in the region.

For instance, Morocco does not merely export medicines to Africa; it also makes sure to set up pharmaceutical companies and healthcare centers.

It develops infrastructure, builds vocational and technical training centers and implements projects that offer steady jobs and income – such as fishermen's villages – and that support smallholders and encourage the preservation of ecosystems.



A case in point is the project for the protection and development of Cocody Bay, in Abidjan, within the framework of a unique model of cooperation between the relevant public institutions in Morocco and Cote d'Ivoire, with the effective involvement of private sector operators from both countries.

This integrated, solidarity-based vision which underpins Morocco's relations with African sister nations requires all the stakeholders that we have invited to take part in this endeavor to shoulder their responsibility and to fulfill their obligations in order to maintain Morocco's credibility.

For us, Africa is not about goals and objectives; dealing with Africa involves a commitment towards the African citizen, wherever he or she may be.

We attach as much importance to improving the livelihood of Africans in their countries as we do to African migrants in Morocco. As a result, they do not suffer the same hardships endured in many parts of the world.

Dear Citizens,

Morocco was one of the first countries of the South to adopt a genuine solidarity-based policy regarding sub-Saharan migrants. This integrated policy, which is rooted in humanitarian values, is designed to make sure migrants' rights and dignity are safeguarded.

As part of the implementation of this policy, my country has, without any arrogance, pomposity or discrimination, regularized the situation of migrants using fair and reasonable standards. It has provided the conditions needed for migrants to reside, work and lead a dignified life within our community.

This is hardly surprising on the part of Moroccans, considering the way they always treat their guests. Generosity, hospitality and the warmth of their welcome have long been deep-rooted features of our identity and culture.

Needless to say, our African brothers and sisters are facing some difficulties in Morocco. But these difficulties have nothing to do with the color of their skin, their nationality or their status as migrants. They enjoy the same rights.

I am deeply satisfied to note that migrants are hardworking people, who are known for their good behavior, their commitment to the rule of law and their respect for Moroccan values and sanctities.

Let me add, in this regard, that we are only fulfilling our duty towards these people, whose circumstances have led them to risk their lives and leave their families and homeland.

This humanitarian policy has earned Morocco the honor of co-chairing, alongside Germany, the Global Forum on Migration and Development for 2017-2018.



Morocco, which has long rejected the methods adopted by some to address migration issues and which have turned out to be a failure, is proud of what it is doing in terms of receiving and integrating migrants. It will keep up this practical, humanitarian approach.

As for those who criticize Morocco, or dare to disparage my country, they have yet to provide migrants with something – if only a fraction of what we have offered.

I regret that a distorted approach to migration issues was adopted in the Mediterranean. As a result, there has been no real policy to integrate migrants.

All that migrants have been offered are job opportunities, but with near to impossible requirements which very few of them can meet.

Dear Citizens,

The entire world is talking about migration and the tragedies migrants have to endure.

The situation is further compounded by the spread of the phenomenon of extremism and terrorism, and by attempts to link it – rightly or wrongly – to migrants, especially in Europe.

In this respect, I wish to call on Moroccans living abroad to remain firmly committed to their religious values and to their time-honored traditions as they face up to this phenomenon which has nothing to do with their culture or background.

I also urge them to maintain their good reputation, to show forbearance in these trying circumstances, to close ranks and to be, as always, staunch advocates of peace, concord and co-existence in their country of residence.

I realize how difficult the situation is for them. They suffer from the distortion of the image of Islam; they also suffer from terrorist attacks, which have already claimed the lives of many of them.

Our community abroad also suffers from the backlash of terrorist activities and from accusations levelled against them, by some, because of their faith.

Naturally, I strongly condemn the killing of innocent people. Killing a priest is forbidden by religion; murdering him inside a church is unforgivable madness, for he is a human being and a religious man – even if he is not a Muslim. Islam commands us to take good care of the people of the Book. The Almighty says: *"We make no distinction between one and another of His apostles"*. He also said: *"But it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers."*

Those who engage in terrorism, in the name of Islam, are not Muslims. Their only link to Islam is the pretexts they use to justify their crimes and their folly. They have strayed from the right path, and their fate is to dwell forever in hell.



They think – out of ignorance – that they are engaging in *jihad*. Since when has *jihad* been synonymous with killing innocent people? The Almighty says: "*Do not transgress limits, for Allah loves not transgressors*".

Is it conceivable that God – the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate – could order someone to blow himself up or kill innocent people? Islam, as a matter of fact, does not permit any kind of suicide – whatever the reasons or circumstances. The Almighty says: "*if any one slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people*".

Islam is the religion of peace. Almighty God says: "*O you who believe! Enter into peace whole-heartedly*".

As for *jihad* in Islam, it is governed by specific conditions, including the fact that it is to be resorted to only for defense purposes – not for murder or aggression. It is forbidden to kill people under the pretext of *jihad*.

Also, to be valid, *jihad* would have to be called for by the Commandership of the Faithful – and not by an individual or group of people.

Those who call for murder and aggression, those who excommunicate people without a legitimate reason, those who interpret the Quran and the Sunnah to suit their purposes, are actually lying to Allah and His Messenger.

That, in fact, is the real blasphemy, for the Almighty says: "*Who, then, does more wrong than one who utters a lie concerning Allah, and rejects the Truth when it comes to him; is there not in Hell an abode for blasphemers?*". My ancestor, Prophet Muhammad – may peace and blessings be upon him – said: "*Whoever tells lies about me deliberately, let him take his place in Hell*".

Terrorists take advantage of some young Muslims – particularly in Europe – and of their ignorance of the Arabic language and of true Islam, to spread their distorted messages and misleading promises.

How could anyone of sound mind believe that the reward for *jihad* is a number of virgins? How could one possibly accept that anyone who listens to music will be swallowed by the depths of the earth, and other such lies?

Terrorists and extremists use all means to convince young people to join them in order to attack societies profoundly committed to the ideals of freedom, openness and tolerance.

Moreover, several Muslim groups and societies perceive themselves as authorities on Islam, arguing that they represent true Islam – which implies others do not. In reality, however, they could not be further from Islam and its tolerant values.



Such attitudes encourage the spread of the extremist ideology, of excommunication and terrorism, for terror advocates believe that this is the path to true Islam. These people need to take a hard look at themselves and decide to what extent they are responsible for the crimes and human tragedies perpetrated in the name of Islam.

All of us are targets. Whoever thinks or believes in what I have just said is a target of terrorism. That scourge hit Morocco in the past, then it struck in Europe and in many parts of the world.

As ignorance spreads in the name of religion, Muslims, Christians and Jews have to close ranks in order to tackle all forms of extremism, hatred and reclusiveness.

As attested by the history of mankind, it is impossible to achieve progress in a society which is plagued by radicalism and hatred, for the latter are the main ingredients of insecurity and instability.

There are countless examples, in human civilization, of success stories which show that religious interaction and coexistence produce open societies in which love, harmony and prosperity prevail.

This was also illustrated by the Islamic civilization, especially in Baghdad and Andalusia, which were among the greatest, most open civilizations of mankind.

Dear Citizens,

Morocco's national responses to many complex regional and international issues – such as development, migration and the fight against terrorism – are in line with a firm commitment to serve African peoples.

That should not come as a surprise since Morocco has always been at the forefront of advocates calling for the liberation of our continent. In this regard, I am following in the footsteps of my pioneering ancestors who believed in Africa, and who worked earnestly for the unity, openness and progress of its peoples.

So it is with great reverence that we remember the heroes of the Revolution of the King and the People, my revered grandfather, His Majesty King Mohammed V, and my venerable father, His Majesty King Hassan II – may they rest in peace – as well as all the nation's glorious martyrs.

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله تعالى وبركاته.